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ABSTRACT

Based on the general research of Joseph Campbell in adventure plots from mythology, the author explores the simplified monomyth plots currently in frequent use in mass media programing. The close relationship of media fiction to mythic stories is established through the analysis of more than 25 stories resulting from media broadcasting. The media stories fell into heroic genres but also contained considerable amounts of non-heroic content; however, the serial fiction heroes were likely to act as rescuers of weaker characters rather than act as hero-characters involved in tests of bravery or strength. (CH)

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Myth Structure and Media Fiction Plot: An Exploration

by

James D. Harless

The Ohio State University

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A wide range of research has focused on media fiction, exploring the questions of the value content of the material as well as the effects this content might have on consumers.

There has been relatively little consideration, however, of the relationship of the popular stories to other types of narratives, although many scholars have assumed a close relationship exists.

It is story pattern and plot which impresses Frye as showing similarities between popular fiction and folk tale.

He writes:

> Folk tales are simply abstract story-patterns, uncomplicated and easy to remember, no more hampered by barriers of language and culture than migrating birds are by customs officers, and made up of interchangeable motifs that can be counted and indexed . . .
>
> What we see clearly in the folk tale we see less clearly in popular fiction. If we want incident for its own sake, we turn from the standard novelists to adventure stories ... where the action is close to if not actually across the boundary of the credible [5:594].

If there are similarities in the plots of folk tales and media narratives, knowledge of the similarities might be helpful in understanding both story types. Ostensibly, contrasts in the two types of narratives could highlight media factors in operation in media fiction presentations.

Several writers have studied the morphology of myth and folk tale. Perhaps the most detailed pattern put forth to date is the "myth of the hero" derived from myth and folk tale by Joseph Campbell [4.]. Campbell's argument is that the hero myth follows the general pattern of separation, initiation, and return.

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a

> decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man [4:30].

The monomyth, or "universal adventure," is a construction from tales of hero adventures from around the world [4:36].

> Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral . . . If one or another of the basic elements of the archetypal pattern is omitted from a given fairy tale . . . it is bound to be somehow or the other implied [4:38] . . . .

Again, each stage of the monomyth might not be found in all adventure tales, and one tale might "isolate and greatly enlarge" a typical element of the monomythic cycle. Furthermore, "characters or episodes can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes" [4:246].

The separation stage of the monomyth includes the following:

(1) The call to adventure: a blunder, or a chance happening, reveals a strange fact or new world. A child drops her golden ball into a pond. The ball is retrieved by a frog. This "herald" often appears in folk tales. Also in evidence here are the dark forest, the great tree,

the carrier of the "power of destiny" [4:49-58].

(2) If the hero refuses the call to adventure, the adventure is converted into its negative, and the hero becomes a victim creating new problems for himself, with only his own disintegregation before him [4:59].

(3) Supernatural aid is encountered after the hero accepts the call to adventure. He receives an amulet or charm against the dangers he is about to face, or the aid of guide or ferryman or teacher [4:69-72].

(4) The crossing of the first threshold: with the personification of his destiny, his supernatural aid, as a guide, the hero proceeds to the entrance of a zone of "magnified power," which is protected by a threshold guardian. One threshold guardian was the god Pan who caused panic, or "groundless fright" in those who came into his presence. Another guardian, the ogre sticky-hair, "kills everyman he sees." The young Buddha escaped sticky-hair with self-denial, and his lack of fear of death [4:77-89].

(5) The belly of the whale motif in folk tales may follow the encounter with the threshold guardian, if the guardian is not conciliated. The hero, or heroes, are swallowed up by a whale, or an elephant---an act symbolic of self-annihilation. The death and dismemberment of the Egyptian hero Osiris fits this motif [4:90-94].

The initiation stage of the hero includes:

(1) The road of trials. Beyond the threshold the hero moves in a dreamy, fluid landscape, aided by his supernatural guide, into a series of trials or ordeals. Psyche, for

example, was forced to sort a huge quantity of seeds and vegetables. She was aided by an army of ants.

In this motif, dragons are slain and "surprising barriers" are passed over and over [4:97-109].

(2) The meeting with the goddess follows the successful completion of the road of trials. This motif often represents the height of the adventure: a mystical marriage with the Queen-mother of the world. However, a bad mother may turn-up at this stage. Actaeon saw Diana bathing and she turned him into a stag so that he was felled by his own hounds. On the other hand, Niall Eochaid, one of five sons of an Irish king, turned a well hag into a beautiful woman by hugging and kissing her as she requested [4:109-120].

(3) The woman as temptress occurs in some myths, where the hero is struggling to be above life. Fearing the image of the father, this Hamlet-Oedipus hero views the marriage with the temptress as a defeat. One hero of this motif, St. Bernard, was able to withstand many temptations from women who wished to aid and/or sleep with him [4:131-36].

(4) Atonement with the father is an alternative at this stage. It usually follows a thorough testing of the hero by the father character. The Navaho twin warriors were put into a steam lodge by their father, the Sun. The boys also survived a poisoned peace pipe and won the full confidence of their father. In contrast, Phaethon could not drive his father's sun chariot without scorching the heavens. The boy fell in flames into the river Po [4:131-36].

(5) The hero's triumph may be depicted as his own

apotheosis [4:246].

(6) Another motif of this stage may be the ultimate boon: the capture of the elixir of life, drawing water from the fountain of youth. A mesopotamian hero, Gilgamesh, struggled through gardens and over rivers to dive beneath the cosmic sea and capture the watercress of immortality. He then lost it to a snake who gained the habit of shedding his skin as a result of eating the plant [4:185-188].

The third portion of the monomyth is the return:

(1) The hero returns with the boon he has obtained, to aid humanity. The hero may refuse to return, however [4:193-96].

(2) The Magic flight motif offers two possibilities: (a) if the hero has acquired his boon with the approval of the gods, he is given magic aid to return to humanity, but (b) if the return is resented or the boon has not been freely given, there follows a "lively, often comical, pursuit" [4:196-98].

(3) Rescue from without is a recurring motif in the return stage. The Eskimo hero, Raven, had to wait for men outside the whale to cut him from his belly prison [4:207-09].

(4) The crossing of the return threshold often presents the hero with problems. Rip Van Winkle, for example, found his gun rusted and was almost subdued by a crowd who found his politics less than likeable [4:217-21].

(5) A possible motif at the end of the monomyth is one indicating the hero has become master of two worlds: the human and the divine. The transfiguration of the Christ is one mythic example of this motif [4:229-30].

(6) The boon the hero brings with him from beyond restores the world [4:246].

Shumaker found the monomythic pattern remarkably like many classic legends and contemporary novels. He felt the pattern would be most useful if a policy of broad constructionism of interpretation were adopted.

> The father-creator becomes the parent, the headmaster, the boss, the general, or anybody else who is endowed with authority and power. The descent into hell becomes the stresses and terrors of any fictive adventure, or, more generally still, merely the fictive "middle." The return is the end of the struggle, the stasis in which the plot eventuates [6:135-36].

In order to compare the monomythic adventure pattern to media adventure stories a selection of content was made from several sources. A group of 13 stories was taken from Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, for November, 1972 [1]. The long-standing adventure programs Gunsmoke and The F. B. I. were watched during the Fall of 1972. Four stories from each series were summarized. Four stories were also taken from the original Batman comic book series [3].

An analysis of the content from the point of view of the monomyth is presented in Table 1.

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Table 1 About Here

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Of the twenty-five stories selected for study, two seem to have as many as six points of similarity with the monomythic pattern. "Day of the Vampire," [1:18-31] seems to be a negative plot with a "refusal of the call" to adventure.

A balding, paunchy Sheriff Creasley is running for reelection against Jack England, a younger man with state police experience. Tom Santon, the druggist, wishes Creasley good luck in the election (call to adventure). The first threat to Creasley comes when the town undertaker reports a body with no blood in its veins. Rather than call in the state police, Creasley hushes the incident up (refusal of the call). He also opposes the advice of his mistress (a sensible goddess) to improve himself by leaving town. After Creasley refuses the undertaker a loan there are rumors that England has new charges to bring against Creasley. In a meeting with the top political power (the "father"), Creasley is able to sustain the denial that nothing is wrong. Following his mistress's insistence, however, he visits a psychiatrist to learn about vampires. This "boon" is not brought back to the people. Creasley refuses to believe the information. A late scene sees the undertaker fall from a balcony after a struggle with Creasley. After Creasley (inexplicably) wins the election, Tom Santon, the druggist, is revealed as the vampire who now feels safe with the inept Creasley in office for four more years.

As suggested by the refusal of the call to adventure motif, Creasley's victory is actually his defeat. He will go no further. He and his town are sheltering a vampire.

A more positive example of the monomythic pattern is seen in a Gunsmoke episode, "Hostage!".

Matt Dillon arrests the brother of the leader of a notorious band of thieves known as the "dog soldiers." The brother is convicted and sentenced to hang. Jude, the older brother, invades Dodge City at night and kidnaps Kitty. He offers to exchange Kitty for his brother. Dillon rides to the governor for a stay, but can not get it.

After the hanging Jude returns to Dodge City with Kitty. She has been greatly mistreated. He pushes her to the ground and shoots her, then rides off. She is still alive, but her spirit is broken, Doc reports. Dillon takes her hand, tenderly, and says, "I need you." Kitty has improved by morning.

Dillon discards his badge and goes after Jude. A posse forms behind him and follows. Dillon orders these Dodge City men home, then rides to challenge Jude to see if he likes to fight "men as well as women."

The two men fight and Dillon gains the advantage. But he is about to be killed by one of Jude's men when the Dodge City men show themselves, having surrounded the dog soldiers, and rescue Dillon.

The drama seems to exhibit (1) the call to adventure, (2) the crossing of the threshold in Virgil's arrest, (3) the road of trials for Dillon as he attempts to get a stay for Virgil's hanging. there is a momentary (4) "mystical marriage" in the hand-holding scene as Kitty recovers, and Dillon's fight with the leader of the dog soldiers touches

on the problem of atonement (5) with a father-figure. The arrival of the Dodge City men seems a good example of (6) "rescue from without."

Other stories evidence parts of the monomyth.

In "Bug Out" [1:124-34] a young boy is jumped by two "beatniks" who torture him in an attempt to find buried treasure. The boy, raised by a wise old swamp man, leads them to a deserted spot and leaves them there to be finally overcome by swamp skeeters. A call to adventure, magical aid in some skeeter repellant, and the crossing of the threshold seem the relevant motifs here.

In "Fury" [1:70-83] a young man and his pregnant wife (mystical marriage) are forced to crash-land their plane in a storm. The man goes for help and encounters a wealthy man who is jealous of his privacy. The young man is beaten and the wife, left alone, dies. Finally after further beatings, the young man kills the wealthy man and his guard (atonement).

Other stories seem to bear little relationship to the monomythic pattern. "What Are Friends For?" [1-135-59] is a tough-guy who-done-it with multiple incidents and a rambling plot. The hero is hired by a former friend to find out who is trying to sabotage the friend's gambling casino. The hero untangles the puzzle, but he also alienates the casino owner by insulting the owner's daughter and (the owner thinks) seducing the owner's treacherous girl friend. The owner (the "father") denies him his pay.

In "The Pill Problem" [1:94-106] a middle-aged couple has

grown apart. In a complicated plot they attempt to slip lethal pills to each other. The maid is killed by mistake. Two possible motifs may be represented: the "trial" motif from the maid's point of view, or a negative mystical marriage---if such a thing exists.

"Never a Harsh Word" [1:120-23], a story of a woman who shoots her husband rather than hurt his feelings by asking for a divorce, seems also to have little applicability to the monomyth.

Also distant in relationship to the monomyth is "The Man Who Liked Murderers" [1:32-43], a moody story of a French detective who spends most of his time waiting to be called as a witness in a trial, and digesting information about a murderer who escaped in a fog. After phone calls to his wife and mistress, and descriptions of rabbit stew and the fog bound night, the detective does venture out to find the corpse of the man who hid the escaped murderer and was killed by him.

The totals of the columns in Table 1 give an indication of the mythic motifs most common to this selection of fiction. Modes which occurred more than 10 times were (1) the call to adventure, (2) the crossing of the first threshold, (3) the road of trials, (4) the meeting with the goddess, and (5) atonement with the father. The selection seems to lean to the first half of the monomyth: to surprise openings, challenges from startling "ogres," and to goddesses--although there is, understandably enough, a lack of "goddesses" in this Batman content.

Encounters with authority figures were coded as "atonement" with the father. "At-one-ment" is not as common as violent struggle with the authority figure in this selection of stories, however. The hero in "Fury" kills the wealthy man responsible for the death of the hero's unborn child and wife. As noted above, the Gunsmoke episode "Hostage," Dillon fights the leader of a band of thieves who kidnapped and mistreated Kitty.

Wolfenstein and Leites found a similar pattern in the popular films they analyzed in the late 1940's:

> The father figure in the melodrama is bad and dangerous. He is sometimes the hero's boss, frequently powerful as a gang leader, a nightclub owner, or a public official or policeman concealing his crimes behind a facade of respectability, or in a position of wealth and high standing . . . This man attacks the hero directly or indirectly, and without provocation. [7:150].

The pattern is the result, they feel, of the fact the American father is not seen in real life as a strong moral authority, and that the American son is led to believe he is potentially superior to the powerful father. The researchers found the son-figure usually triumphant in the filmed struggles. [7:153].

Two Gunsmoke stories do show "at-one-ment" with the father. In "Milligan" a shy farmer is rewarded by Marshal Dillon and good townsfolk for having shot a popular bandit.

The body of a gunslinger, "Tatum," is recommended to the judgment of God, following a struggle with angry towns people who wished to keep his body from their cemetery.

If there are similarities between these stories and the monomyth, analysis of the content indicates two striking differences:

(1) the media material contains a considerable amount of "nonheroic" content, and (2) media heroes in this story selection are often rescuers who intervene in the plot, rather than ones who are tested in it.

Non-Heroic Content

A "bad" or negative adventure tempts two protagonists. In "To The Manner Born" [1:2-17], a young American, studying drama in England, comes to idealize the 18th century of Sheridan. His fantasies take him more and more from the present. He ignores the advise of friends and the charms of a lovely girl. But, his dream of the 18th century turns into a nightmare of thieves and disease, and he flees in horror from a tavern into the street where he is run over by a bus. In a final touch of mystery it's noted the young man has fresh hoof prints on his body.

Barrows, a brilliant accountant, also decides to pursue a "bad" adventure in the F. B. I. story, "The Wizard." He dreams of being a master criminal and robs his bank to finance a grand robbery plan. As the plan unfolds, he insists on being present and active at the scene of the

crime itself, although his criminal friend advises against this action. In the final scenes, Barrows goes inside the depository to lead in the robbery. His nervousness grows into panic and the robbery attempt is foiled by guards and the arriving F. B. I. agents.

Two other non-heroes fail in their attempts to persuade women: goddesses or temptresses.

In "Message from Marsha" [1:84-93] the protagonist, Larry, robs his boss to gain honeymoon money for his "goddess" girl friend, Marsha. While she has reluctantly agreed to the robbery scheme, she has been troubled by (1) her promise to her mother not to marry until twenty-one years old, and (2) Larry's announcement that he will carry on with a "B-girl" unless the marriage occurs at once. Larry returns from the robbery to find his arrest has been arranged. He will be in prison until the heroine's twenty-first birthday. (In some ways, the story parallels the Diana-Actaeon myth reported above.)

In "Steal at Any Price" [1:61-69] a pair of partners bargains with an eccentric woman for her antiques. One of the partners closes the deal, he reports. But, at an auction of the antiques the police arrive with the true owner. The bargaining partner, it turns out, has not charmed, but murdered the false owner and stuffed her body in one of the trunks now being reclaimed.

A know-it-all crook is unable to figure one angle in "Harry the Angle" [1:44-49]. Wounded in a robbery, Harry is

hurrying to his hide-out (flight motif) but decides to kidnap a doctor to tend his wounds. In his haste he mistakes the female doctor's brother for the doctor. The brother delays until Harry slips into vertigo, and the brother can manage to escape and call the police.

In "Canyon of No Return," in the F. B. I. series, three commit a robbery and escape in an airplane. They land the plane, finally, and separate. One man goes off alone, slipping through the woods. The other two crooks kidnap a couple and force them to ride with them down river in a raft. The F. B. I. agents pursue the crooks until they are caught. The foursome must be rescued by divers, as the river is quite turbulent downstream.

The non-heroic protagonist is a standard feature in the F. B. I. series. The structure of the program is such that there is usually an arrest or rescue of a principal, erring character in each program. The main plot line features either this "bad" protagonist, or one attempting to escape from the "bad guys."

In "The Loner," the F. B. I. agents chase a lone bandit as he returns to his dead sister's home. He meets a girl and falls in love. The introduction is made by a restaurant (night club?) owner who wishes to get any money Morgan, the loner, might have. The owner's men follow Morgan and the girl when they leave town. Morgan robs a race track and is wounded by the hoods when he returns to his motel. The girl has been forced to return to the restaurant. He struggles

to return and find the girl, but is saved from an encounter with the crooked owner by the intervention of the F. B. I. The story resembles the monomyth at four points (See Table 1).

In "Holiday With Terror," a young woman is induced into going along with her kidnappers on a "beach outing." The girl gradually realizes her predicament, but can not escape. The male kidnapper drives her to an automobile warehouse to kill her. F. B. I. agents arrive in time to save her.

The print medium stories of non-heroic content differ from these television ones in that the print protagonists are often not shown to be "wrong" until the end of the story when a "twist" reveals their status, or their fate. In the F. B. I. stories, and the Batman comics, the villains are known, almost from the opening, and suspense is a question of how the villains will be caught.

If there is a basic or over-riding "fatal flaw" in all of these "non-heroic" protagonists, it is not immediately obvious. At least three stories present non-heroes or crooks who are foolhardy--who rush in without being able to handle the situation they enjoin: "To The Manner Born," "The Wizard," and "Canyon of No Return." "Harry the Angle" acts in haste and is the victim of his own foolish pride. But "Message From Marsha," "Steal at Any Price," and "The Loner," all have likeable protagonists who suffer because they break the law. The treatment of Larry in "Message From Marsha," is sympathetic. Morgan, "The Loner," in the F. B. I. story, and many of the F. B. I. protagonists also receive sympathetic treatment and are "flawed" only in that they are lawbreakers.

"Chance" as a source of punishment or downfall is evident in only one story: "The Pill Problem", [1:94-106]. An innocent maid and her husband are killed in the swapping of pills between two other characters.

The Hero As Rescuer

As in some of the F. B. I. programs, good characters in Gunsmoke often struggle along until aided by the rescuing hero. In "Milligan," a retiring farmer joins a posse (call to adventure) and through circumstance "back shoots" the bandit (crossing the first threshold). The farmer then faces a series of trials by several evil characters, as the result of being labeled a "back shooter." Matt Dillon takes his part in a saloon fight--rescues him---and also brings him reward money for the shooting of the robber (atonement).

Dillon's part is that of protector in "Tatum." An old gunfighter is mortally wounded in a fight with a bear. Dying, the man asks that he be buried beside his wife. His daughters and the town are unfriendly to this idea. While the plot from Tatum's viewpoint follows the monomyth somewhat, Dillon has little to do or say except to those who would keep Tatum's body from the town cemetery.

The villain carries the plot in "The Brothers," a third Gunsmoke story. Kitty, protecting herself, kills the brother of a noted outlaw. The outlaw's relentless pursuit of his brother's murderers leads him to murder several times. He attempts to kill Kitty, but Dillon arrives in time to save her.

Another serial hero, Batman, also tends to intervene in the story, rather than be challenged directly. An early encounter with the Joker sees the master criminal commit two murders before Batman moves into the plot. A three-way fight at a hoodlum's home allows Joker to escape to commit a third murder. In an extended chase, Robin is slugged and Batman is gassed, but the Joker is finally captured [3:28-40].

Several years ago Rudolph Arnheim found three types of characters evident in radio soap operas: good, bad, and weak characters. The weak character, he hypothesized, provided a mirror of the "listener's own feelings and experiences," and attracted the listener to the story as "something which concerns herself." The good character, on the other hand, provided a "safe platform from which to look down on the weak character's unfortunate adventures [2:58] . . . ."

> It allows the listener to identify herself with a woman who is always good and right, recommended by her virtue, energy, helpfulness, leader qualities and by the outstanding position which is granted to her in the structure of the play and by her fellow-characters . . . The weak character is the object of her helpful activity . . . An examination of the plots shows that she steers the destinies of afflicted people more often than she is herself involved in conflict. But if she is involved, then she appears prevalently as the innocently suffering victim of other

> people's failure. . . If she creates trouble herself she does so as a praiseworthy person for praiseworthy reasons. [2:59].

The third type of character, the evil character, is the enemy against whom the good woman defends herself and others. [2:60].

That Arnheim might have been describing episodes in Gunsmoke and the F. B. I. seems obvious. In "Milligan" a weak protagonist is saved from town hoods. Marshal Dillon must protect the wounded "Tatum" from an angry, irrational group of enemies. F. B. I. agent Erskin rescues "The Loner" from a greedy hood, a kidnapped couple from a pair of foolhardy robbers, and a young naive girl from a murderous kidnapper in "Holiday With Terror."

Arnheim's hypotheses of the psychological formula of the soap opera were derived from content analysis. That these hypotheses are applicable to these modern television adventure serials renews his call for the hypotheses to be tested on the reactions of listeners.

Summary and Conclusions

A comparison of the monomythic pattern with stories taken from the mass media reveals several modes of mythic structure can be found in popular fiction stories. Mythic motifs most common in this selection of stories were a call to adventure or surprise opening, a crossing of the first threshold, or meeting with an awesome opponent, a road of trials or testing period, a meeting with a heroine or goddess, and an atonement or encounter with a father figure.

The encounter with the father figure was generally more violent than might have been anticipated from the suggestions of the monomyth. Research from American melodramic films suggests the pattern may occur in other American fiction stories, and that it is related to American father and son relationships.

In general, this selection of stories indicates a tendency for American popular fiction to view the meeting with the father as an encounter wherein victory or defeat is at stake--life or death, escape or imprisonment, monetary gain or capture--Rather than "at-one-ment" or the gaining of the confidence of the father figure.

While a sample of stories was not drawn for this study, it seems evident, also, further explorations of media fiction plot should consider the fact that the plots of this selection tended to account for motifs to the front of the monomythic separation-initiation-return pattern. Is it due to oversight, lack of interest, or sampling error (popular novels were not considered here, etc.) that the culture which teaches the story of Jonah and the Whale almost any Sunday morning, does not promulgate a popular fiction analogue during the week? One wonders, also, if there are no "boons" in mass media fiction.

The monomyth may have even better application than suggested heretofore. The "best" stories here seem to be those most like the monomythic pattern. The converse seems also true: those least like the monomyth were the "worst" stories. A systemtic audience sample and a carefully

selected sample of stories should be assembled to test the entertainment power of the monomyth's pattern against non-mythic plots.

Comparison of the media stories with the mythic patterns revealed two striking differences: (1) the media stories contained a considerable amount of "non-hero" material, and (2) the serial story hero tends to function more as a rescuer, or intervener, than as a protagonist in the plot.

The "non-heroes" are often not revealed as wrong-doers or failures until a final twist of the plot in this selection of print fiction stories. The serial stories indicate the villains early, however, as opponents of the heroes.

the non-heroes are often afflicted with foolhardiness or pride. But "bad" protagonists were often treated sympathetically and "flawed" only in that they were law-breakers.

Arnheim has suggested that radio soap operas had three types of characters: good, bad, and weak. The heroes in serial adventure stories of this selection were "rescuers," in much the same way Arnheim's soap opera heroines were rescuers. Secondary characters carry the serial TV plot--weak , foolhardy, or sympathetic law-breaking characters--while the hero stands above the conflict, ready to save the non-heroic protagonist when he or she falls into trouble with the bad characters---the attackers.

The three character structure of the soap operas led Arnheim to hypothesize:

> Events are shown to be caused not so much by

> people expending their energies on fulfilling their tasks in spite of all obstacles, but rather by their desperate defense of a status quo the value of which is not clearly demonstrated by the serials . . . Identification with the 'ideal woman' . . . endows (the listener) with an efficiency she does not possess and assurance that the assistance which she ought to seek in her own energies will be forthcoming from the outside" [2:78].

For Campbell, on the other hand, the mythological hero

> is the champion not of things become but of things becoming; the dragon to be slain by him is precisely the monster of the status quo: Holdfast, the keeper of the past . . . He is Holdfast not because he keeps the <u>past</u> but because he <u>keeps</u> [4:78].

A challenge for future popular arts research continues to be the scientific assessment of the possibility that folklore and media stories, differing in plot and story structure, may be at cross-purposes psychologically: and that broadcast or serial media stories may be psychologically and sociologically dysfunctional.

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Television Dramas

The F. B. I. (American Broadcasting Company)

"The Wizard," Nov. 12, 1972

"The Loner," Nov. 19, 1972

"Canyon of No Return," Nov. 26, 1972

"Holiday With Terror," Dec. 3, 1972

Gunsmoke (Columbia Broadcasting System)

"Milligan," Nov. 6, 1972

"Tatum," Nov. 13, 1972

"The Brothers," Nov. 27, 1972

"Hostage!" Dec. 11, 1972

Table 1

A Comparison of Media Fiction Stories With the Monomyth Pattern

Story	Call	Refusal	Aid	1st Threshold	Belly Whale	Road Trials	Goddess	Temptress	Atonement	Apotheosis	Boon	Return	Flight	Rescue	2nd Threshold	Master of 2 Worlds	Restores	Totals
Bug Out	X		X	X														3
Day of the Vampire	X	X		X			X		X		X							6
To The Manner Born	X	X			X		X											4
Sunday Traffic	X					X		X										3
The Man Who Liked Murderers						X	X											2
Black Belt				X		X			X									3
Message from Marsha							X	X	X									3
A Steal At Any Price								X	X									2
Fury						X	X		X									3
Harry the Angle											X		X		X			3
What Are Friends For?	X							X	X									3
The Pill Problem						?	?											2
Never a Harsh Word						?												1
Gunsmoke:																		
"Milligan"	X			X		X			X		X							5
"Tatum"	X			X		X	X		X									5
"The Brothers"	X			X		X			X									4
"Hostage!"	X			X		X	X		X					X				6
The F. B. I.:																		
"The Wizard"				X		X	X		X		X							5
"The [illegible]oner"				X		X	X		X									4
"Canyon of No Return"							X				X		X		X			4
"Holiday With Terror"	X			X		X								X				4
Batman:																		
"The Case of the Chemical Syndicate"	X			X														2
"The Legend of Batman"	X																	1
...against the Joker	X			X														2
"Here comes Alfred"	X			X		X			X									4
Totals	14	2	1	13		12	10	4	13		5		2	2	2			